Practitioner's Docket No. 2709/113 (Formerly 1525D/113) *PATENT*

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of: Putnam et al.

Application No.: 09/882,292 Group No.: 3623
Filed: June 15, 2001 Examiner: Boyce, Andre D.
For: System and Method of Identifying Options for Employment Transfers Across Different Industries

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TRANSMITTAL OF THIRD CORRECTED APPEAL BRIEF
(PATENT APPLICATION–37 C.F.R. § 41.37)

1. Transmitted herewith is a Corrected Appeal Brief, submitted in response to the Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief mailed September 17, 2007.

2. STATUS OF APPLICANT

This application is on behalf of a small entity. Small entity status was previously asserted.

3. FEE PAYMENT

The filing fee of $250.00 was paid on December 7, 2006.

4. FEE DEFICIENCY

If an extension and/or fee is required, and if any fee for claims is required, charge Deposit Account No. 19-4972.

Date: September 21, 2007

/Jeffrey T. Klayman, Reg. #39,250/
Jeffrey T. Klayman
Registration No. 39,250
Bromberg & Sunstein LLP
125 Summer Street
Boston, MA 02110-1618
U.S.
617-443-9292
Customer No. 02101

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant:	Putnam et al.	Art Unit:	3623
Appl. No:	09/882,292	Examiner:	Boyce, A.
File Date:	June 15, 2001	Docket No.:	2709/113

Invention: **System and Method of Identifying Options for Employment Transfers Across Different Industries**

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CORRECTED APPEAL BRIEF

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Real Party in Interest

The real party in interest is RightOptions LLC, the assignee of record.

Related Appeals and Interferences

Appellants' legal representative is not aware of any other appeals or interferences which will directly affect, or be directly affected by, or have a bearing on, the Board's decision in the present appeal.

Status of Claims

Claims 3-62, 80-102, and 104-124 are pending in the application.

Claims 3-6, 8-12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 28-30, 34-38, 40, 42, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53-55, 59, 61, 80-102, 104, 105, 111, 112, 118, and 119 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Salmon et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,592,375. Claims 7, 13, 16, 18, 20, 22, 25-27, 31-33, 39, 41, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 56-58, 60, and 62 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salmon in view of Joao, U.S. Patent No. 6,662,194. Claims 106-110, 113-117, and 120-124 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salmon et al.

The appeal, noticed September 25, 2006, is with respect to the rejected claims, claims 3-62, 80-102, and 104-124.

Status of Amendments

As understood by Appellants, Appellants' preliminary amendment filed on November 3, 2005 and Appellant's amendment filed on April 21, 2006 have been entered and considered by the Examiner.

Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

The subject patent application relates to systems and methods for analyzing job functions across different industries, particularly for identifying employment options for individuals and for identifying appropriately qualified job candidate populations for employers. The method utilizes a computer to identify a job function in a first industry. The system and method then access a database and correlates the job function in the first industry with a set of second industries in which the job function may be transferable.

Independent claim 3 relates to a computerized method of identifying industries for potential transfer of a job function capability with respect to a first industry. The method involves (a) in a first digital computer process, identifying a job function in the first industry; (b) in a second digital computer process, accessing a database, stored on a digital storage medium, that correlates, for the job function, the first industry with a set of second industries with respect to which the job function capability is potentially transferable; and (c) in a third digital computer process, using the database to identify the second industries. The use of a database that correlates, for an identified job function, a first industry with a set of second industries with respect to which the job function capability is potentially transferable is discussed, inter alia, at page 11, line 17 through page 14, line 9 (with reference to FIG. 1) of the subject patent application.

Independent claim 80 relates to a method of identifying industries for potential transfer of a job function capability with respect to a first industry. The method involves (a) in a first digital computer process, identifying a job function in the first industry; and (b) in a second digital computer process, using a symbolic representation of a job transfer between the first industry and a second industry, of a set of second industries with respect to which the job function capability is potentially transferable, to access a database on a digital storage medium that correlates, for the job function, the first industry with the set of second industries. The use of symbolic representations of industry transfers to access a database that correlates, for an identified job function, a first industry with a set of

second industries is discussed, inter alia, at page 29, line 21 through page 31, line 3 (with reference to FIGs. 11A and 11B) of the subject patent application.

Independent claim 88 relates to a method of identifying industries for potential transfer of a job function capability with respect to a first industry. The method involves (a) in a first digital computer process, identifying a job function in the first industry; and (b) in a second digital computer process, using a symbolic representation that categorizes a subject of a user's job transferability query to access a database, on a digital storage medium, that correlates, for the job function, the first industry with a set of second industries with respect to which the job function capability is potentially transferable. The use of symbolic representations that categorize a subject of a user's job transferability query is discussed, inter alia, at page 31, lines 4-16 (with reference to FIGs. 11A and 11B) of the subject patent application.

Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

1. The rejection of claims 3-6, 8-12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 28-30, 34-38, 40, 42, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53-55, 59, 61, 80-102, 104, 105, 111, 112, 118, and 119 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Salmon et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,592,375) is improper and must be withdrawn because Salmon et al. fails to teach or otherwise suggest the use of a database to correlate, for a particular job function, a first industry with a set of second industries as required by the claims.

2. The rejection of claims 7, 13, 16, 18, 20, 22, 25-27, 31-33, 39, 41, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 56-58, 60, and 62 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salmon in view of Joao (U.S. Patent No. 6,662,194) is improper and must be withdrawn because the combination of Salmon et al. and Joao fails to teach or otherwise suggest the use of a database to correlate, for a particular job function, a first industry with a set of second industries as required by the claims.

3. The rejection of claims 106-110, 113-117, and 120-124 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salmon et al. is improper and must be withdrawn because Salmon et al. fails to teach or otherwise suggest the use of a database to correlate, for a particular job function, a first industry with a set of second industries as required by the claims.

Argument Pages

Pertinent Chronology

The subject patent application was filed on June 15, 2001.

A restriction requirement issued October 4, 2005.

A response to the restriction requirement and preliminary amendment was filed November 3, 2005 in which Applicants elected to prosecute claims 3-62 and 80-102; canceled claims 1, 2, 63-79, and 103, and added new claims 104-124 which corresponded roughly to original claims 1, 2, and 63-67 but in dependent form.

A first office action on the merits issued February 2, 2006. The Examiner objected to the Abstact; rejected claims 17, 18, 47, and 49 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite; rejected claims 3-6, 8-12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 28-30, 34-38, 40, 42, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53-55, 59, 61, 80-102, 104, 105, 111, 112, 118, and 119 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Salmon et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,592,375; rejected claims 7, 13, 16, 18, 20, 22, 25-27, 31-33, 39, 41, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 56-68, 60, and 62 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salmon in view of Joao, U.S. Patent No. 6,662,194; and rejected claims 106-110, 113-117, and 120-124 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salmon et al.

A telephonic interview was held on March 29, 2006 between Examiner Andre Boyce and Applicants' Attorneys Bruce Sunstein and Jeffrey Klayman to discuss the Office Action of February 2, 2006. Specifically, the Salmon reference was discussed in relation to the claimed invention. Salmon describes a computer-implemented system for brokering transactions between sellers and buyers of goods or services. The Salmon reference correlates the information in each line item of a resume without regard to potential transferability of job function capability.

A response was filed on April 21, 2006 in which the Applicants explained that the claims of the subject patent application require the use of a database that correlates a job function in a first industry with a set of second industries with respect to which the job function capability is potentially transferable in order to identify the set of second industries. Applicants further explained that the Salmon reference does not teach or suggest the type of correlations carried out by the present invention. Salmon does not

deal with evaluating potential transferability of job functions among industries. In fact, Salmon structures his system to avoid the types of correlations employed in the subject application. (Col. 4, lines 50-57).

Applicants received a Final Office Action dated July 11, 2006 in which the Examiner essentially maintained his former position that the claims are anticipated by Salmon et al alone or in combination with Joao.

A Notice of Appeal, accompanied by a Pre-Appeal Brief, was filed on September 25, 2006.

A Panel Decision from Pre-Appeal Brief Review, mailed November 7, 2006, determined that there is at least one actual issue for appeal.

Thus, claims 3-62, 80-102, and 104-124 remain pending and stand rejected.

Argument

1. The rejection of claims 3-6, 8-12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 28-30, 34-38, 40, 42, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53-55, 59, 61, 80-102, 104, 105, 111, 112, 118, and 119 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Salmon et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,592,375) is improper and must be withdrawn because Salmon et al. fails to teach or otherwise suggest the use of a database to correlate, for a particular job function, a first industry with a set of second industries as required by the claims.

It is well settled that a claim is invalid as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102 only if a single prior art reference discloses either expressly or inherently, each limitation of the claim. *In re Cruciferous Sprout Litigation*, 301 F.3d 1343, 64 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1202 (Fed. Cir. 2002). Additionally, as set forth in MPEP §§ 2143 and 2143.03, the cited prior art references must teach or suggest all claim limitations before a *prima facie* case of obviousness can be made. Salmon et al. simply do not disclose each and every limitation of the present claims, alone or in combination with Joao.

The claims require the use of a database that correlates a job function in a first industry with a set of second industries with respect to which the job function capability is potentially transferable in order to identify the set of second industries. The present application provides examples of such correlations. For example, FIG. 1-1 of the subject patent application shows correlations between a marketing management function in each of a number of first industries to a corresponding set of second industries. The letter "X" at the intersection of a row and a column indicates potential transferability between the job function capability in the first industry and the second industry. Applicants note that correlations are not necessarily bilateral. For example, it can be seen that the marketing management function in the consumer package goods industry (row 1) is potentially transferable to the consumer durables industry (as indicated by the letter "X" at the intersection of row 1 and column 2), but the marketing management function in the consumer durables industry (row 2) is not transferable to the consumer package goods industry (as indicated by an empty box at the intersection of row 2 and column 1). In the

context of the subject patent application, the correlation is based on an evaluation of the skill set associated with the job function.

The Salmon reference does not teach or otherwise suggest the type of correlations employed in the subject patent application. In fact, Salmon explicitly teaches that correlations of the type discussed above do not count and structures his system to avoid considering such correlations. Pointedly, at column 4, lines 50-57, Salmon says that a person with "production experience" in the biotechnology industry and "design experience" in the aerospace industry does not match a search for someone with "design experience in biotechnology" (i.e., even though the person has both "design experience" and "experience in biotechnology"). Salmon makes no attempt to correlate, say, design experience in aerospace with other industries to which that job function capability is potentially transferable, say, for example, the biotechnology industry. The apparent goal of Salmon is to ensure that a particular subject is not considered for a particular job unless the subject already has experience with that job in the relevant industry.

Further, the Salmon reference requests that the user input a number of criteria, including the industries in which the user desires to search. If a user fails to input the desired industry, the Salmon system will search based on the other criteria, without regard to the industry (Col. 5, lines 38-46). For example, as stated in column 5, lines 38-46 of Salmon, if a buyer using the Salmon database searches for "production experience in the Aerospace industry", the system will return only those candidates with that specific experience. In this example, candidate P00002 would not match the search because there is no link between the linked rows 291 and 292 (i.e., design experience in Aerospace) and the linked rows 294 and 295 (i.e., production experience in Biotechnology). The system will not return candidates with experience in potentially transferable industries. Alternatively, if a user of the Salmon system only searches for "design experience", the system will return candidates with design experience regardless of the industry and regardless of whether the experience in that industry is transferable. Therefore, the Salmon system does not correlate a job function in a first industry with a set of second industries with respect to which the job function capability is potentially transferable, as required by the claims. Rather, the Salmon database merely searches based on the inputted criteria. It is clear, then, that Salmon does not deal at all with evaluating

potential transferability of job functions among industries, and actually disparages the types of correlations employed in the subject patent application.

Thus, it should be clear that Salmon merely describes a technique for organizing and searching through information in candidates' resumes. Salmon neither teaches nor suggests a database that correlates a job function in a first industry with a set of second industries with respect to which the job function capability is potentially transferable in order to identify the set of second industries, as in the claims. There is no teaching or suggestion in Salmon to correlate one industry with a number of other industries for potential transfer of a job function capability. Salmon merely attempts to find candidates with experience that matches a particular query. The fact that Salmon uses "correlation" to organize and search through information is irrelevant to the subject patent application, as Salmon's correlation is for a completely different purpose and does not provide the features discussed in the subject patent application and called out in the claims.

Prior to the subject application, there was no known framework to perform the claimed invention, either manually or via computer. Where job recruiting has typically been a subjective activity (e.g., a marketing manager assumes that he can market anything to anyone at any time and therefore can move to any industry; job recruiters send job applicants on interviews hoping for a hire), the subject patent application provides an objective way to evaluate the potential transferability of a job function from one industry to another. Some examples of how such correlations might be used by a job applicant, a potential employer, and a job recruiter include: (1) a job recruiter using the computerized method of the subject patent application to identify other industries in which a job applicant's skills are transferable, and (2) a potential employer using the computerized method of the subject patent application to determine whether the skill set of a job applicant is transferable to its industry based on the previous job function(s) performed by the job applicant).

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3-6, 8-12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 28-30, 34-38, 40, 42, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53-55, 59, 61, 80-102, 104, 105, 111, 112, 118, and 119 are allowable over Salmon.

2. The rejection of claims 7, 13, 16, 18, 20, 22, 25-27, 31-33, 39, 41, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 56-58, 60, and 62 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salmon in view of Joao (U.S. Patent No. 6,662,194) is improper and must be withdrawn because the combination of Salmon et al. and Joao fails to teach or otherwise suggest the use of a database to correlate, for a particular job function, a first industry with a set of second industries as required by the claims.

For the reasons stated above, independent claims 3, 80, and 88 are allowable over Salmon. Because a dependent claim is deemed to include all limitations of its base claim and any intervening claim, and because Salmon fails to teach or suggest all limitations of those claims, the combination of Salmon and Joao necessarily lacks all limitations of those claims. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that dependent claims 7, 13, 16, 18, 20, 22, 25-27, 31-33, 39, 41, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 56-58, 60, and 62 are allowable over Salmon in view of Joao.

3. The rejection of claims 106-110, 113-117, and 120-124 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salmon et al. is improper and must be withdrawn because Salmon et al. fails to teach or otherwise suggest the use of a database to correlate, for a particular job function, a first industry with a set of second industries as required by the claims.

For the reasons stated above, independent claims 3, 80, and 88 are allowable over Salmon. Because a dependent claim is deemed to include all limitations of its base claim and any intervening claim, and because Salmon fails to teach or suggest all limitations of those claims, the combination of Salmon and Joao necessarily lacks all limitations of those claims. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that dependent claims 106-110, 113-117, and 120-124 are allowable over Salmon.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that claims 3-62, 80-102, and 104-124 are patentable over Salmon alone and in combination with Joao and a decision of the Board to that effect is respectfully solicited.

September 21, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

/Jeffrey T. Klayman, Reg. #39,250/
Jeffrey T. Klayman
Registration No. 39,250
Attorney for Applicant

Bromberg & Sunstein LLP
125 Summer Street
Boston, MA 02110-1618
(617) 443-9292

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Appendix I: Claims Appendix

3. A computerized method of identifying industries for potential transfer of a job function capability with respect to a first industry, the method comprising:

a. in a first digital computer process, identifying a job function in the first industry;

b. in a second digital computer process, accessing a database, stored on a digital storage medium, that correlates, for the job function, the first industry with a set of second industries with respect to which the job function capability is potentially transferable; and

c. in a third digital computer process, using the database to identify the second industries.

4. A method according to claim 3, wherein using the database to identify the second industries comprises identifying an industry into which a job function capability of a subject is potentially transferable, out of the first industry.

5. A method according to claim 4, wherein the database quantifies degree of transferability between the first industry and each industry of the set of second industries.

6. A method according to claim 4, wherein the database is associated with a communications network.

7. A method according to claim 6, wherein the database is associated with a web server on the World Wide Web.

8. A method according to claim 4, the method further comprising:

in a fourth digital computer process, identifying an enterprise, within at least one of the second industries.

9. A method according to claim 8, wherein the enterprise potentially has an employment opportunity with respect to an equivalent job function.

10. A method according to claim 4, the method further comprising:

in a fifth digital computer process, providing a user with a transferability rating for a transfer out of the first industry, into an industry of the set of second industries.

11. A method according to claim 4, the method further comprising:

in a sixth digital computer process, providing a user with an explanation of degree of transferability out of the first industry, into an industry of the set of second industries.

12. A method according to claim 4, the method further comprising:

in a seventh digital computer process, providing a user with a direct link, over a communications network, to a job posting source.

13. A method according to claim 12, wherein the job posting source is a website.

14. A method according to claim 12, wherein the link is keyed to a destination job posting source based on a user's input concerning a job seeker.

15. A method according to claim 4, wherein the method further comprises receiving input from a user over a communications network, and wherein the step of identifying a job function is performed based on such input.

16. A method according to claim 15, wherein the input is received over the Internet.

17. A method according to claim 15, the method further comprising:
communicating a transferability rating to the user over a communications network, for a transfer out of the first industry, into an industry of the set of second industries.

18. A method according to claim 17, wherein the list transferability rating is communicated over the Internet.

19. A method according to claim 15, the method further comprising:
communicating an explanation of degree of transferability to the user over a communications network, for a transfer out of the first industry, into an industry of the set of second industries.

20. A method according to claim 19, wherein the list explanation of degree of transferability is communicated over the Internet.

21. A method according to claim 15, the method further comprising:

communicating a list of the second industries to the user over a communications network.

22. A method according to claim 21, wherein the list is communicated over the Internet.

23. A method according to claim 21, the method further comprising:

limiting the list according to preferences provided by the user.

24. A method according to claim 21, the method further comprising:

providing the user with further information on at least one of the second industries over the communications network.

25. A method according to claim 21, the method comprising:

providing the user with contact information for a recruiter, over the communications network.

26. A method according to claim 25, wherein the recruiter specializes in recruiting for an industry of the set of second industries.

27. A method according to claim 25, wherein the recruiter specializes in recruiting for the job function.

28. A method according to claim 21, the method further comprising:

communicating to the user, over the communications network, a list of at least one enterprise within at least one of the second industries.

29. A method according to claim 28, wherein the at least one enterprise potentially has an employment opportunity with respect to an equivalent job function.

30. A method according to claim 29, the method further comprising:

providing the user with further information on an enterprise from the list of at least one enterprise, over the communications network.

31. A method according to claim 29, the method further comprising:

providing the user with information on an employment contact at an enterprise from the list of at least one enterprise, over the communications network.

32. A method according to claim 29, wherein the list of at least one enterprise is communicated over the Internet.

33. A method according to claim 29, wherein the list of at least one enterprise is restricted based upon size of company with which a job seeker has experience.

34. A method according to claim 3, wherein using the database to identify the second industries comprises identifying an industry out of which a job function capability is potentially transferable, into the first industry.

35. A method according to claim 34, the method further comprising:
in an eighth digital computer process, providing a user with a transferability rating for a transfer into the first industry, out of an industry of the set of second industries.

36. A method according to claim 34, the method further comprising:
in a ninth digital computer process, providing a user with an explanation of degree of transferability into the first industry, out of an industry of the set of second industries.

37. A method according to claim 34, wherein the database quantifies degree of transferability between the first industry and each industry of the set of second industries.

38. A method according to claim 34, wherein the database is associated with a communications network.

39. A method according to claim 38, wherein the database is associated with a web server on the World Wide Web.

40. A method according to claim 34, the method further comprising:

in a tenth digital computer process, providing the user with a direct link, over a communications network, to a resume posting source.

41. A method according to claim 40, wherein the resume posting source is a website.

42. A method according to claim 40, wherein the link is keyed to a destination resume posting source based on a user's input concerning a position to be filled.

43. A method according to claim 34, the method further comprising:
in an eleventh digital computer process, identifying an enterprise within at least one of the second industries.

44. A method according to claim 43, the method further comprising:
in a twelfth digital computer process, providing the user with information on an employment contact at the enterprise.

45. A method according to claim 34, wherein the method further comprises receiving input from a user over a communications network, and wherein identifying a job function is performed based on such input.

46. A method according to claim 45, wherein the input is received over the Internet.

47. A method according to claim 45, the method further comprising:

communicating a transferability rating to the user over a communications network, for a transfer into the first industry, out of an industry of the set of second industries.

48. A method according to claim 47, wherein the list transferability rating is communicated over the Internet.

49. A method according to claim 45, the method further comprising:
communicating an explanation of degree of transferability to the user over a communications network, for a transfer into the first industry, out of an industry of the set of second industries.

50. A method according to claim 49, wherein the list explanation of degree of transferability is communicated over the Internet.

51. A method according to claim 45, the method further comprising:
communicating a list of the second industries to the user over a communications network.

52. A method according to claim 51, wherein the list is communicated over the Internet.

53. A method according to claim 51, the method further comprising:
limiting the list according to preferences provided by the user.

54. A method according to claim 53, wherein the preferences include a desired skill set.

55. A method according to claim 51, the method further comprising:
providing the user with further information on at least one of the second industries over the communications network.

56. A method according to claim 51, the method comprising:
providing the user with contact information for a recruiter, over the communications network.

57. A method according to claim 56, wherein the recruiter specializes in recruiting for an industry of the set of second industries.

58. A method according to claim 56, wherein the recruiter specializes in recruiting for the job function.

59. A method according to claim 51, the method further comprising:
communicating to the user, over the communications network, a list of at least one enterprise within at least one of the second industries.

60. A method according to claim 59, the method further comprising:

providing the user with information on an employment contact at an enterprise from the list of at least one enterprise, over the communications network.

61. A method according to claim 59, the method comprising:

providing the user with further information on an enterprise from the list of at least one enterprise, over the communications network.

62. A method according to claim 59, wherein the list of at least one enterprise is communicated over the Internet.

80. A method of identifying industries for potential transfer of a job function capability with respect to a first industry, the method comprising:

a. in a first digital computer process, identifying a job function in the first industry; and

b. in a second digital computer process, using a symbolic representation of a job transfer between the first industry and a second industry, of a set of second industries with respect to which the job function capability is potentially transferable, to access a database on a digital storage medium that correlates, for the job function, the first industry with the set of second industries.

81. A method according to claim 80, wherein the symbolic representation comprises a job function symbol.

82. A method according to claim 80, wherein the symbolic representation comprises an industry symbol.

83. A method according to claim 80, wherein the symbolic representation comprises a transfer operator.

84. A method according to claim 80, wherein using the symbolic representation comprises accessing a transferability rating for a transfer between the first industry and the second industry.

85. A method according to claim 80, wherein using the symbolic representation comprises accessing text of an explanation of degree of transferability for a transfer between the first industry and the second industry.

86. A method according to claim 80, further comprising:

using the symbolic representation as an input language for a query to the database.

87. A method according to claim 80, further comprising:

automatically generating the symbolic representation based upon input provided by a user.

88. A method of identifying industries for potential transfer of a job function capability with respect to a first industry, the method comprising:

a. in a first digital computer process, identifying a job function in the first industry; and

b. in a second digital computer process, using a symbolic representation that categorizes a subject of a user's job transferability query to access a database, on a digital storage medium, that correlates, for the job function, the first industry with a set of second industries with respect to which the job function capability is potentially transferable.

89. A method according to claim 88, wherein the subject is a job seeker.

90. A method according to claim 89, wherein the symbolic representation comprises a job function symbol and an industry symbol.

91. A method according to claim 89, wherein the symbolic representation comprises a symbol chosen from the group consisting of: an educational background symbol, a geographical location symbol, a company size symbol, and a hierarchical position symbol.

92. A method according to claim 89, wherein the symbolic representation comprises a symbol representing the subject's preferences.

93. A method according to claim 88, wherein the subject is the target population of an employer's search for potential employees.

94. A method according to claim 93, wherein the symbolic representation comprises a job function symbol and an industry symbol.

95. A method according to claim 93, wherein the symbolic representation comprises a symbol chosen from the group consisting of: an educational background symbol, a geographical location symbol, a company size symbol, and a hierarchical position symbol.

96. A method according to claim 93, wherein the symbolic representation comprises a symbol representing the subject's preferences.

97. A method according to claim 88, wherein the subject is represented using symbols representing experience in more than one industry.

98. A method according to claim 88, wherein using the symbolic representation comprises accessing a row of transferability ratings from a transferability matrix.

99. A method according to claim 88, wherein using the symbolic representation comprises accessing text of explanations of degree of transferability corresponding to a row of a transferability matrix.

100. A method according to claim 88, further comprising:

using the symbolic representation as an input language for a query to the database.

101. A method according to claim 88, further comprising:

automatically generating the symbolic representation based upon input provided by a user.

102. A method according to claim 88, wherein the symbolic representation is also used as an element in symbolically representing a job transfer between the first industry and the second industry.

104. A method according to claim 3, wherein identifying a job function in the first industry comprises receiving input from a user, over a communications network, related to a job seeker's present job function in the first industry, whereby the second industries represent recommended industries for the job seeker's job search.

105. A method according to claim 3, wherein identifying a job function in the first industry comprises receiving input from a user, over a communications network, related to an employer's industry and to a job function of interest to the employer, whereby the second industries represent recommended industries in which the employer may find a population of potential employees.

106. A method according to claim 3, further comprising:

in a digital computer process, updating the database's correlation of industries based upon feedback information provided by users who have used industry correlation information from the database.

107. A method according to claim 106, wherein updating the database's correlation is performed using a preference analysis technique.

108. A method according to claim 107, wherein updating the database's correlation is performed using collaborative filtering.

109. A method according to claim 107, wherein updating the database's correlation is performed using a preference matrix.

110. A method according to claim 109, wherein rows and columns of the preference matrix correspond to rows and columns in an industry transferability data structure.

111. A method according to claim 80, wherein identifying a job function in the first industry comprises receiving input from a user, over a communications network, related to a job seeker's present job function in the first industry, whereby the second industries represent recommended industries for the job seeker's job search.

112. A method according to claim 80, wherein identifying a job function in the first industry comprises receiving input from a user, over a communications network, related

to an employer's industry and to a job function of interest to the employer, whereby the second industries represent recommended industries in which the employer may find a population of potential employees.

113. A method according to claim 80, further comprising:
in a digital computer process, updating the database's correlation of industries based upon feedback information provided by users who have used industry correlation information from the database.

114. A method according to claim 113, wherein updating the database's correlation is performed using a preference analysis technique.

115. A method according to claim 114, wherein updating the database's correlation is performed using collaborative filtering.

116. A method according to claim 114, wherein updating the database's correlation is performed using a preference matrix.

117. A method according to claim 116, wherein rows and columns of the preference matrix correspond to rows and columns in an industry transferability data structure.

118. A method according to claim 88, wherein identifying a job function in the first industry comprises receiving input from a user, over a communications network, related

to a job seeker's present job function in the first industry, whereby the second industries represent recommended industries for the job seeker's job search.

119. A method according to claim 88, wherein identifying a job function in the first industry comprises receiving input from a user, over a communications network, related to an employer's industry and to a job function of interest to the employer, whereby the second industries represent recommended industries in which the employer may find a population of potential employees.

120. A method according to claim 88, further comprising:
in a digital computer process, updating the database's correlation of industries based upon feedback information provided by users who have used industry correlation information from the database.

121. A method according to claim 120, wherein updating the database's correlation is performed using a preference analysis technique.

122. A method according to claim 121, wherein updating the database's correlation is performed using collaborative filtering.

123. A method according to claim 121, wherein updating the database's correlation is performed using a preference matrix.

124. A method according to claim 123, wherein rows and columns of the preference matrix correspond to rows and columns in an industry transferability data structure.

Appendix II: Evidence Appendix

None.

Appendix III: Related Proceedings Appendix

None.